

Message Text

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R 071242Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5230
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 MADRID 07658

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, SP, FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH-SPANISH RELATIONS IN LIGHT OF GISCARD'S
VISIT

REF: PARIS 20603

1. SUMMARY: GISCARD WAS LAVISHLY WELCOMED IN HIS
JUNE 28-JULY 1 VISIT TO SPAIN, A REFLECTION OF HIS
PRESTIGE HERE, THE ATTENTION AND RESPECT SPANIARDS
PAY THEIR MOST IMPORTANT NEIGHBOR, AND APPRECIATION FOR
THE OBVIOUS PRIORITY THE FRENCH WERE ATTACHING TO THIS
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STATE VISIT. FOR SPAIN, THE CENTRAL FOCUS OF THE
VISIT WAS SPANISH ENTRY INTO THE EC, FOR THE GOS HAS LONG
BEEN WORRIED ABOUT HAVING TO OVERCOME FRENCH-INSPIRED
DELAYING TACTICS. GISCARD'S CAREFULLY BALANCED FORMU-
LATION ON THE SUBJECT SPARKED A MODICUM OF CRITICAL COM-
MENT, BUT THE OVERALL TONE WAS HIGHLY POSITIVE AND THE GOS
CONSIDERS THAT HIS ASSERTION FAVORING SPANISH ENTRY, MADE

AFTER A CABINET MEETING ON THE SUBJECT, EFFECTIVELY
COMMITTS THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO SPANISH ENTRY. MORE
BROADLY, THE VISIT FOCUSED SPANISH ATTENTION ON BOTH THE
SIMILARITIES OF SITUATION AND INTEREST (THE LATIN
CULTURAL HERITAGE, THE CONNECTION WITH NORTH AFRICA,
THE UNIQUE ATLANTIC/MEDITERRANEAN LOCATION), AND ON
SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES AND COMPLAINTS RANGING FROM BASQUE
PROBLEMS (FRENCH HANDLING OF ETA TERRORISTS IN FRANCE)
TO BILATERAL TRADE (WHICH HAS RECENTLY SHIFTED INTO
SPAIN'S FAVOR). WHILE HOPING FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS
WITH FRANCE, SPAIN WILL REMAIN WARY, A REFLECTION OF THE
COMPLEX OF RESPECT, RESERVE,) RESENTMENT WITH WHICH
IT LOOKS AT ITS LARGER, STRONGER, BETTER PLACED, AND
MORE SECURE NEIGHBOR. BUT BECAUSE OF GISCARD'S SKILL
AND PRESTIGE AND THE FLATTERINGLY HIGH POWER AND NUMBERS
OF THE GROUP ACCOMPANYING HIM, THE VISIT SHOULD PROVE
TO HAVE BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE IN NUDGING RELATIONS ONTO A
HIGHER AND MORE POSITIVE PLANE. END SUMMARY.

2. FRENCH PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING VISITED
SPAIN JUNE 28-JULY 1, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS MINISTERS OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, CULTURE, AND
(LATER IN THE TRIP) DEFENSE, AS WELL AS BY THE
PRESIDENCY SECRETARY GENERAL AND SOME 300 OTHERS, IN-
CLUDING A GAGGLE OF COOKS FOR THE DINNER HE HOSTED
WHILE HERE. HIS VERY FULL SCHEDULE INCLUDED MEETINGS
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WITH KING JUAN CARLOS AND PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ, CALLS
AT THE SENATE (WHERE HE GAVE A SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES)
AND AT MADRID'S CITY HALL, A PRESS CONFERENCE, A VISIT
TO THE OLD ROYAL COUNTRY ESTABLISHMENT OF LA GRANJA,
AND A TRIP TO THE GALICIA REGION, WHERE HE VISITED SITES
OF HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND RELIGIOUS INTEREST, AND
WITNESSED NAVAL AND AIR MANEUVERS FROM ABOARD A HELI-
COPTER CARRIER. NEWS OF GISCARD'S PROGRESS DOMINATED
THE SPANISH PRESS DURING HIS STAY.

3. IN ADVANCE OF THE VISIT, BUT OBVIOUSLY CONNECTED
WITH IT, WAS THE ANNOUNCED PURCHASE BY SPAIN OF 48
MIRAGE F-1'S, FOR A TOTAL PACKAGE OF SOME \$1 BILLION.
IN ADDITION, WHILE GISCARD WAS HERE SPAIN SIGNED A
LETTER OF INTENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF FOUR AIRBUSES,
WITH AN OPTION FOR FOUR MORE. GISCARD'S WELCOME
GENERALLY WAS THE MOST LAVISH WE CAN RECALL FOR A STATE
VISITOR. NOT ONLY WERE THE RECENT FRENCH ELECTIONS SEEN
BY SPANIARDS AS VERY DECIDEDLY A PERSONAL POLITICAL
TRIUMPH FOR GISCARD, BUT HIS ATTENDANCE AT THE SWEARING-
IN OF KING JUAN CARLOS IN THE UNCERTAIN DAYS FOLLOWING
FRANCO'S DEATH CAST AN EARLY AND IMPORTANT VOTE OF

CONFIDENCE IN SPAIN'S NEWLY ENTHRONED YOUNG MONARCH
AND IN THE COUNTRY'S POST-FRANCO POLITICAL PROSPECTS.
GISCARD HAD STRESSED THIS THEME IN PRE-ARRIVAL INTER-
VIEWS, AND THE WARM PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GISCARD
AND JUAN CARLOS WAS ALSO PICKED UP IN THE PRESS HERE TO
GOOD EFFECT.

4. IN THE SPANISH VIEW, THE CENTRAL FOCUS OF THE VISIT
WAS SPAIN'S ENTRY INTO THE EC. FRANCE HAS LONG BEEN
SEEN HERE AS THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TO EASY SPANISH

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 MADRID 07658

ENTRY, WITH SOME ASSERTING THAT INDUSTRIAL AS WELL AS
AGRICULTURAL CONCERNS UNDERLIE THE FRENCH ATTITUDE.
DESPITE THE FACT THAT SPANIARDS HAVE FOR SOME TIME FELT
SPAIN'S POLITICAL RIGHT TO JOIN WAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED
AND UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, GISCARD'S
CAREFUL FORMULATION BALANCING FRANCE'S FAVORING SPANISH
ENTRY AGAINST THE "SERIOUS AND DELICATE" PROBLEMS THE
PROCESS WILL ENTAIL GOT A PRESS PLAY HERE WHICH ACCEN-

TUATED THE POSITIVE. THE SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS OF
CHIRAC AND MARCHAIS OPPOSING EC MEMBERSHIP FOR SPAIN
ALSO RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE SPANISH PRESS COVERAGE WHICH
TENDEDD TO UNDERCUT GISCARD. BUT FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA
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TOLD THE CHARGE JULY 4 THAT THE GOS CONSIDERS THAT
GISCARD SPOKE AS HE DID FOLLOWING A CABINET MEETING ON
THE SUBJECT, THAT THE GAULLISTS HAVE FIVE CABINET
POSITIONS AND REPORTEDLY WENT ALONG WITH THE POSITIVE
DECISION, AND THAT NOT JUST GISCARD--CHIEF OF STATE,
AFTER ALL--BUT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT ITSELF IS NOW
CLEARLY COMMITTED TO SPANISH ENTRY.

5. MORE BROADLY, THE FOREIGN POLICY PARALLELS, STEMMING
FROM BOTH SITUATION AND INTEREST, ARE REAL AND SIGNIFI-
CANT. BEYOND THE TWO COUNTRIES' SHARING THE LATIN
CULTURAL HERITAGE, THE INTEREST IN NORTH AFRICA, AND
THE UNIQUE ATLANTIC/MEDITERRANEAN LOCATION, SPAIN IS
CLEARLY INTRIGUED WITH FRANCE'S INTERNATIONAL INDEPEN-
DENCE, AND ALSO SEES SIMILARITIES AND POTENTIAL FOR
EXPLOITATION BETWEEN CONTINUING FRENCH INFLUENCE IN
FRANCOPHONE AFRICA AND SPAIN'S OWN SITUATION IN LATIN
AMERICA. GISCARD'S REFERENCES DURING THE VISIT TO THE
NEED FOR A BETTER SHAKE FOR "MEDITERRANEAN AGRICULTURE",
WHILE SCARCELY EASING SPANISH CONCERNS OVER THE EC ENTRY
ISSUE, WERE A SKILLFUL REMINDER OF THE LONG-
RANGE COMMON INTEREST OF THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE EURO-
PEAN CONTEXT.

6. THERE ARE DIVERGENCES, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY REGARDING
NORTH AFRICA. ON THE ONE HAND, SPANIARDS ARE AWARE THAT
FRENCH SUPPORT FOR MAURITANIA AND ACTION AGAINST THE
POLISARIO HAVE BEEN CRUCIAL TO THE MAINTENANCE IN THAT
REGION OF THE BALANCE THAT IS AT THE HEART OF SPAIN'S
MAGHREB POLICY. CONTAINMENT OF THE POLISARIO -- THANKS
IN NO SMALL PART TO FRANCE -- HAS FURTHERMORE HELPED TO
KEEP THE SAHARA ISSUE FROM ESCALATING SO DANGEROUSLY AS
TO REQUIRE AN EARLY AND PERHAPS HASTY SOLUTION THAT
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MIGHT NOT BE TO SPAIN'S LIKING. ON THE OTHER HAND,
FEARS HAVE ALSO BEEN EXPRESSED HERE THAT FRANCE'S ROLE
IN THE AREA COULD SWELL INTO VIRTUAL HEGEMONY, TO THE
PREJUDICE OF SPANISH INTERESTS.

7. REGARDING THE MAGHREB, SPAIN HAS SOUGHT (DESPITE ALL IT HAS SUFFERED AT ALGERIAN HANDS) TO KEEP THE LINES OPEN TO ALGIERS, AND IS WARY OF BEING SEEN AS PART OF AN ANTI-ALGERIAN CONSPIRACY. PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ RECENTLY DECLARED "IF THERE IS A PARIS-RABAT AXIS, IT DOES NOT RUN THROUGH MADRID".

8. THERE IS A SIMILAR SPANISH CAUTION REGARDING SHABA/ZAIRE. AWARE THAT MOBUTU IS A SUBJECT OF SOME CONTROVERSY IN AFRICA, THE GOS HAS DETERMINED TO AVOID STRICTLY ANY ASSOCIATION WITH HIM OR WITH EFFORTS SUPPORTIVE OF HIM, ON THE BASIS THAT IT CANNOT AFFORD TO JEOPARDIZE ANY OF THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT ON THE CANARIES ISSUE WHICH IT HAS WORKED SO HARD TO OBTAIN. HERE AS WITH ALGERIA, SPAIN WILL WANT TO MAINTAIN SOME DAYLIGHT BETWEEN ITSELF AND FRANCE.

9. ON THE NATO QUESTION, GISCARD WHILE HERE WAS QUOTED AS HAVING IN EFFECT TAKEN THE STANDARD NATO-MEMBER PUBLIC LINE, SAYING IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO HAVE SPAIN AS A MEMBER BUT IT WAS FOR SPAIN TO DECIDE. FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICIALS HERE HAVE REPEATEDLY SAID THAT BECAUSE OF FRANCE'S SUI GENERIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ALLIANCE, THE TOPIC IS NOT SUITABLE FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE SPANISH.

10. ON THE BILATERAL PLANE, ONE IRRITANT FOR SPAIN WHICH

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CAME UP DURING THE VISIT IS THE QUESTION OF FRENCH TREATMENT OF SPANISH BASQUE TERRORISTS, A QUESTION WHICH FOR SPANIARDS HAS CHANGED 180 DEGREES SINCE THE DEATH OF FRANCO. ETA ACTIVISTS NO LONGER HAVE THE PRETEXT OF FIGHTING FASCISM, RUNS THE ARGUMENT HERE, AND SHOULD BE ACCORDED NO SYMPATHY IF THEY CROSS THE BORDER. GISCARD SAID ORDINARY LAW NOW APPLIED ON THIS MATTER, A REASSURING MESSAGE WHICH REINFORCES THE WELCOME PRECEDENT ESTABLISHED BY THE SUMMARY RETURN FROM FRANCE IN MID-APRIL OF A WOUNDED ETA TERRORIST (BORDEAUX 80 NOTAL); BUT SPANISH CONCERNS WILL CONTINUE. THE GOS MUST ALSO DEAL WITH RECURRING DOMESTIC PRESSURE REGARDING THE CONDITION OF
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SPANISH RESIDENTS OF FRANCE, WHO ACCORDING TO A FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICER TOTAL SOME 500,000, THE LARGEST SUCH COLONY IN EUROPE.

11. ONE PERSISTENT SPANISH GRIPE CONCERNS CONTINUING FRENCH ACTIONS AGAINST SPANISH FISHING VESSELS IN THE BAY OF BISCAY. WHEN THIS AROSE DURING THE VISIT, GISCARD POINTED TO WHAT HE CALLED SPAIN'S NEED FIRST TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE EC OVERALL; BUT IN THE SPANISH VIEW IT WILL STILL BE FRANCE THAT GETS THE BLAME. WITH REGARD TO THE MOUNTING FRENCH COMPLAINTS ABOUT SPAIN'S FAVORABLE BILATERAL TRADE BALANCE, SPANIARDS POINT OUT DEFENSIVELY THAT FOR MANY YEARS BEFORE 1977 THE TILT RAN THE OTHER WAY, AND THAT IT ILL BEHOOVES THE FRENCH TO COMPLAIN SO MUCH SO SOON. ADDITIONALLY, SPAIN HAS OF COURSE THROWN IN A SUBSTANTIAL SWEETENER WITH THE MIRAGE F-1 PURCHASE AND THE AIRBUS LETTER OF INTENT. THE LATTER ESPECIALLY IS A MOVE OF CLEAR POLITICAL WILL CONSIDERING THE LONG LIST OF REASONS WE HAVE HEARD IBERIA GIVE WHY IT DID NOT WANT THE PLANE (MADRID 7403 NOTAL). AS IS KNOWN, THE GOS HAD HOPED TO "GLOBALIZE", I.E. LUMP TOGETHER, WHAT PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ IN HIS APRIL PRESS CONFERENCE (MADRID 4236 NOTAL) CALLED POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN FRENCH-SPANISH RELATIONS. THE SHORTHAND AND SOMEWHAT CRUDE TRANSLATION OF THIS HAS BEEN THAT SPAIN WOULD BUY THE MIRAGES IF FRANCE BACKED OFF ON ITS RESISTANCE TO SPANISH ENTRY INTO THE EC, BUT

SPANISH OFFICIALS HAVE REALLY HAD THE WHOLE RANGE OF
BILATERAL ISSUES IN MIND.

12. OVERALL, THE COMBINATION OF RESPECT, RESERVE, AND
RESENTMENT WITH WHICH SPAIN LOOKS TOWARD FRANCE IS
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NORMAL FOR COUNTRIES CONTEMPLATING A LARGER, STRONGER,
BETTER PLACED AND MORE SECURE NEIGHBOR, AND FRANCE
CLEARLY HAS THE UPPER HAND. SPAIN WANTS GOOD RELATIONS
WITH FRANCE, NOT ONLY TO SMOOTH THE WAY TOWARD EC
MEMBERSHIP, A TOP FOREIGN-POLICY GOAL, BUT BECAUSE THE
TWO COUNTRIES ARE SO CLOSE AND SO INTERTWINED CULTURALLY
AND HISTORICALLY.

13. GISCARD HAD NOT EVEN LEFT, HOWEVER, BEFORE A SPANISH
WARINESS AT BEING TAKEN IN BEGAN TO EXPRESS ITSELF, WITH
MOREOTWC MCGDE COMMENTATOR NOTING THAT SPAIN HAD
APPARENTLY EXCHANGED SUBSTANTIAL AIRCRAFT PURCHASES
FOR REASSURING POLITICAL ASSERTIONS OF DUBIOUS ACCOUNTA-
BILITY. BOTH EL PAIS AND THE SOBER, CENTRIST INFORMA-
CIONES CALLED FOR MORE SPECIFIC AND CONCRETE DELIVERY BY
THE FRENCH ON SPAIN'S VARIOUS PROBLEMS.

14. GISCARD MAY NOT HAVE BEEN AS EXPLICIT AND GENEROUS AS
SPAIN WOULD HAVE WANTED, BUT HE DID IN THE COURSE OF HIS
VISIT MAKE A SERIES OF PROPOSALS AIMED AT GIVING MUTUAL
PROBLEMS SYSTEMATIC HIGH-LEVEL TREATMENT. THESE INCLUDE
A MIXED COMMISSION, AN INVITATION (WHICH WAS ACCEPTED)
FOR SUAREZ TO VISIT BARRE BEFORE THE YEAR IS OUT, AND
THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING FRENCH-SPANISH CONSUL-
TATIONS ON THE FRENCH-GERMAN MODEL. SETTING UP MECHANISMS
TO TREAT PROBLEMS IS A LONG WAY FROM SOLVING THEM, BUT
IF THESE OFFERS ARE FOLLOWED UP SERIOUSLY, BILATERAL
RELATIONS SHOULD BENEFIT.

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15. CERTAINLY THE CARPING MENTIONED ABOVE SHOULD NOT
DETRACT FROM THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THE PROBABLY BENEFICIAL
EFFECTS OF THE VISIT. IT IS CLEARLY THE MOST IMPORTANT
AND SUBSTANTIAL ONE MADE TO SPAIN SINCE THE DEMOCRATIC
TRANSITION GOT UNDER WAY. GISCARD'S OWN DIPLOMATIC AND
PUBLIC SKILL, AND THE FLATTERINGLY HIGH POWER AND
NUMBERS (FIVE CABINET MINISTERS AND SOME 300 OTHERS)
OF THE GROUP ACCOMPANYING HIM, SHOULD PROVE TO HAVE BEEN
EFFECTIVE IN NUDGING FRANCO-SPANISH RELATIONS ONTO A
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